

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

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R 111145Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7618

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC

CINCEUR

COMIDEASTFOR

DIA WASHDC

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CORRECTED COPY (TEXT)

MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINT, MORG, MPOL, PK

SUBJECT: IMPENDING SHIFTS AMONG SENIOR ARMY GENERALS

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD-A-69(NOTAL) (B) ISLAMABAD 2294

(C) ISLAMABAD 1995 (D) USDAO ISLAMABAD 081115Z JUN 78 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: A SERIES OF SHIFTS AT SENIOR LEVELS IN THE PAKISTAN ARMY, COUPLED WITH WIDESPREAD CHANGES IN THE TOP LEVELS OF THE PAKISTAN CIVIL SERVICE, SUGGEST A FURTHER

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BEDDING DOWN OF THE REGIME FOLLOWING THE FAILURE OF THE CMLA TO GET ANY SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL FIGURES TO JOIN WITH HIM, ON HIS TERMS, IN A GOVERNMENT AIMED AT BROADENING HIS REGIME'S POLITICAL BASE. QUESTION: IS GENERAL ZIA BEGINNING TO EYE THE PRESIDENCY? END SUMMARY.

2. DATT HAS REPORTED (REF D), AND EMBASSY HAS HEARD

FROM ONE OTHER SOURCE, THAT SEVERAL IMPORTANT SHIFTS ARE IMMINENT WITHIN THE SENIOR LEVELS OF THE PAK ARMY. THEY ARE:

A. TRANSFER OF LGEN MUHAMMAD IQBAL FROM GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING (GOC) FIFTH CORPS AND MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR, KARACHI, TO RAWALPINDI TO ASSUME VACANT POST OF DEPUTY CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF (D/COAS);

B. TRANSFER OF LGEN SADIQ ABBASI, NOW CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF (CGS), TO KARACHI IN PLACE OF IQBAL;

C. TRANSFER OF MGEN LODI, NOW GOC 17 DIVISION AT KHARIAN, TO RAWALPINDI IN PLACE OF ABBASI AS CGS;

D. RETIREMENT OF LGEN A.B. AWAN, CURRENTLY COMMANDANT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE COLLEGE, RAWALPINDI;

E. ASSIGNMENT OF MGEN ANWAR MASOOD, NOW DIRECTOR, MILITARY TRAINING (DMT) AND I.G. PAK ARMY, TO REPLACE AWAN;

F. ASSIGNMENT OF BRIG, RAJA SAROOP KHAN, NOW DIRECTOR, MILITARY OPERATIONS (DMO) PAK ARMY, AS VICE CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF.

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3. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ON THE TIMING OF THE TRANSFERS, BUT DATT SOURCE INDICATES THAT ORDERS HAVE ALREADY BEEN CUT FOR ALL BUT AWAN, AND THE URDU PRESS IS ALREADY SPECULATING ON THE IQBAL TRANSFER.

4. DATT REPORT INDICATES THAT GENERAL ZIA UL-HAQ DECIDED TO BRING IQBAL TO RAWALPINDI TO FILL LONG VACANT D/COAS POSITION TO BRING HIS CONSIDERABL TALENTS TO BEAR ON THE DAY-TO-DAY RUNNING OF THE ARMY, A ROLE ABBASI HAS BEEN AT LEAST PARTIALLY FILLING AS CGS. WITH IQBAL AS HIS ARMY DEPUTY, ZIA WILL BE ABLE TO RELIEVE HIMSELF OF SOME OF THE DUAL BURDEN HE HAS BEEN CARRYING AS COAS AND CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR (CMLA) FOR MOST OF THE LAST YEAR. ZIA IS SAID ALSO TO BELIEVE IQBAL WAS SPENDING TOO MUCH OF HIS TIME ON MLA MATTERS AND NOT ENOUGH ON THE ARMY. COMMENT: AT THE TIME IQBAL WAS SHIFTED TO KARACHI, EARLIER THIS YEAR, IT WAS LAW AND ORDER MLA MATTERS WHICH FIRST COMMANDED AND ENGAGED HIS ATTENTIONS; HIS RECORD IN THIS RESPECT HAS BEEN VERY GOOD BY ALL ACCOUNTS. END COMMENT.

5. DATT REPORT SUGGESTS ABBASI IS A "YES MAN" BUT IS REGARDED AS QUALIFIED TO HANDLE KARACHI JOB. LGEN AWAN,

ONE OF THE SHARPEST AND MOST INTERNATIONALLY-MINDED OFFICERS
IN THE PAK ARMY, WILL REPORTEDLY RECEIVE AN AMBASSADORIAL
POST.

6. COMMENT: WITH WIDESPREAD SHIFTS NOW UNDERWAY IN THE
TOP REACHES OF THE PAKISTAN CIVIL SERVICE (REFAIR) AND
FOLLOWING GENERAL ZIA'S FAILURE TO PUT TOGETHER SOME
TYPE OF POLITICAL GOVERNMENT, THE ARMY SHIFTS WILL BE
WIDELY INTERPRETED AS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE MARTIAL
LAW ADMINISTRATION'S PREPARATIONS FOR A LONG RUN ON THE
RAWALPINDI STAGE. INDEED, THE IQBAL ASSIGNMENT IS PERHAPS
THE MOST IMPORTANT APPOINTMENT ZIA HAS MADE IN SOME TIME,
SINCE IT WILL ENABLE HIM TO TURN OVER THE RUNNING OF THE
ARMY TO AN ABLE, RESPECTED, TRUSTED, AND APPROPRIATELY
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SENIOR SUBORDINATE AND TO CONCENTRATE ON HIS ROLE AS CMLA,
I.E. HEAD OF GOVERNMENT.

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AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
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MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLAD

7. SOME WILL SEE IN THE SHIFTS ALSO SOME POSSIBLE EROSION OF ZIA'S AUTHORITY, ESPECIALLY GIVEN HIS POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES AND HIS RECENT ILLNESS (FROM WHICH HE SEEMS TO HAVE RECOVERED). IQBAL AND LGEN CHISHTI, ZIA'S OUTSPOKEN CABINET-LEVEL ADVISOR ON PARLIAMENTARY, ESTABLISHMENT, AND KASHMIR AFFAIRS, ARE REGARDED BY NEARLY ALL OBSERVERS AS THE TWO STRONGEST MEN IN THE PAK ARMY, AFTER ZIA; FOR THAT REASON, THEY VIRTUALLY CANCEL OUT AS POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS TO THE CMLA, WHEN THAT SUBJECT IS SPECULATED UPON. PUTTING THE DAY-TO-DAY RUNNING OF THE ARMY AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO STAND IN AS COAS IN IQBAL'S HANDS WILL OBVIOUSLY ENHANCE HIS PRESTIGE, BUT THE JOB

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DENIES HIM DIRECT COMMAND OF TROOPS. CHISHTI, WHO ALSO HOLDS A CORPS COMMAND, IS INCREASINGLY BOGGED DOWN WITH HIS POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE CMLA.

8. IN OUR JUDGEMENT, THE EVIDENCE IS INCONCLUSIVE ON THE IMPACT OF THESE LATEST SHIFTS ON ZIA'S POSITION. ALL THAT CAN BE SAID FOR THE MOMENT IS THAT LIKE THE SHUFFLE OF CORPS COMMANDERS EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE MOVES APPEAR TO BE ZIA'S IDEA AND REFLECT HIS OWN BEST JUDGEMENT ON HOW BEST TO GET THE ARMY'S JOB DONE. THIS, OF COURSE, IS A ROLE IN WHICH HE IS MOST SECURE, ROOTED AS IT IS IN THE ARMY'S TRADITIONAL DISCIPLINE AND LOYALTY AND ITS RESPECT FOR THE OFFICE OF "THE CHIEF". OTHERS, OF COURSE, MAY SEE IN THE IQBAL MOVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO KEEP AN INCREASINGLY FREEWHEELING ZIA IN LINE.

9. THERE WILL BE SPECULATION, HOWEVER, AS THE SUMMER WEARS ON ABOUT ZIA'S FUTURE INTENTIONS, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO THE PRESIDENCY. THE EXAMPLE AND SUCCESS OF HIS NAMESAKE 1500 MILES EAST IN DACCA CANNOT BE TOTALLY LOST ON HIM. DESPITE HIS DISCLAIMERS OF INTEREST IN A POLITICAL ROLE, HE COULD WELL BE PONDERING WHETHER OR NOT TO DECLARE HIMSELF PRESIDENT WHEN INCUMBENT FAZAL ELAHI CHAUDHRY'S TERM OFFICIALLY ENDS IN AUGUST. THE CHANGES HE IS ABOUT TO SET IN MOTION COULD BE THE FIRST STEPS TOWARD THAT END.

HUMMEL

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